

JOB SATISFACTION AMONG ROMANIAN DENTISTS

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JOB SATISFACTION AMONG ROMANIAN DENTISTS (Abstract). **Aim:** To analyze the determinants of career satisfaction among a group of dental practitioners. **Material and methods:** Cross-sectional survey conducted in 2016 in a group of 165 dentists working both in private dental practices and in the public sector in Iasi County, Romania. A 16-item questionnaire developed by us was sent via email, the response rate being 87.3%. Data were analyzed with the SPSS 18.0 system for Windows. **Results:** Seventy-six percent of the dentists consider themselves to be satisfied with their work, whereas 65% stated they are satisfied with their career. The aspects the dentists consider most important in their career are the income level (55%) and financial security (49%), while social insurance (6.6%) and continuous medical education (12.1%) were the less important. Fifty-five percent of the surveyed dentists believe that fatigue is the most important negative factor causing lack of job satisfaction, 62.9% are unhappy with their current wages and only 40.7% say that they have a monthly income over 1,000 euros; 52.1% of dentists would choose dentistry again as a career. **Conclusions:** The statistical analysis shows that the best predictor of job satisfaction is the income level, followed by working in a private dental office, level of autonomy and the lack of work-related fatigue. **Keywords:** JOB SATISFACTION, IASI, DENTISTS.

Dentistry is not only an attractive and interesting but also a difficult profession. Without forgetting the satisfaction and benefits brought by this profession, we must also mention the risk factors which may affect dentists' quality of life, like nervousness and depression (1). As in any other career, job satisfaction and motivation do not come only from the financial profit, but should be corroborate with other factors: stress reduction, a pleasant and calm atmosphere in the dental office, collaboration and motivation of the dental team which may result in increased per-

formance (2).

That is why understanding career satisfaction/dissatisfaction of dental practitioners is of special interest both for the political decision makers to implement the best solutions for the oral health system, as well as for the dental students who should be informed about these issues. Numerous surveys on this topic have been published in the literature (3-12).

The aim of our study was to evaluate the aspects related to dentists' satisfaction with their professional career by considering the following factors: the legal status of

the dental practice, monthly income, and satisfaction with the performed medical activities, working relationships with the team members, with the patients and personal relationships.

MATERIAL AND METHODS

The cross-sectional survey was carried out in 2016 in Iasi County, Romania, using our own questionnaire. The questionnaire contained 16 open and closed-ended questions. Questions referred to the following aspects: overall satisfaction, delivery of care, income level, working environment and psychological factors (doctor-patient relationship, relationships with the staff, personal and professional time).

The study group included 165 dentists aged 26 to 54 years, mean age 36.02 ± 8.033

years. They were divided into 2 categories: junior dentists aged 26-35 years, 95 (57%), and experienced dentists aged 36-54 years, 70 (43%); by gender 92 (55%) were women and 73 (45%) men. Of the 165 subjects, 102 (61.8%) were private practice dentists and 63 (38.2%) worked in the public sector as interns or specialists. Data were analyzed using SPSS 18.0 for Windows (SPSS Inc. Chicago, IL, SUA). Statistical significance of the bivariate analysis was assessed by the Pearson chi-square test, at the 0.05 level. The multiple logistic regression analysis was performed to determine the predictors of job satisfaction.

RESULTS

1. Overall satisfaction, delivery of care and earned income (tab. I)

TABLE I
Overall satisfaction, delivery of care and income value

Items	Participants		Chi-square test p
	No.	%	
Overall professional satisfaction			
satisfied and very satisfied	125	76	p=0.001*
dissatisfied and very dissatisfied	40	24	
Work fatigue			
satisfied and very satisfied	75	45	p=0.122
dissatisfied and very dissatisfied	90	55	
Current place of work satisfaction			
satisfied and very satisfied	107	65	p=0.003*
dissatisfied and very dissatisfied	58	35	
First place job satisfaction			
income	90	55	p=0.001*
opportunity to develop professionally	46	27	
promotion opportunities	19	12	
social security	10	6	
Important aspects in professional career			
financial security	81	49	p=0.001*
social insurances	11	6.6	
continuous medical education	20	12.1	
professional training	53	32.3	

Job satisfaction among romanian dentists

Items	Participants		Chi-square test p
	No.	%	
Choosing the same professional career again			
yes	86	52.1	p=0.001*
no	18	10.9	
undecided	61	37	
Attitude towards the income obtained			
paid according performances	61	37.1	p=0.002*
need to earn more	104	62.9	
Salary			
average income (€600)	28	17.3	p=0.001*
€600 - €1,000	70	42	
> €1,000	67	40.7	

* statistically significant at p<0.05

2. Satisfaction with work environmental and psychological factors. Questions 9-12 assess the satisfaction with the activities in the dental office. Table II shows that significant statistical differences were recorded for: the evaluation of personal work performance, 90.9% of respondents considering it a key element for motivation in career, (p=0.001); the pleasant atmosphere in the dental office represents a satisfaction factor for 61.2% of respondents (p=0.021); the level of autonomy is appreciated by 77% of dentists (p=0.002). Insignificant statistical differences were recorded only for the apprecia-

tion of promotion opportunities (p=0.551). Another aspect that may generate satisfaction or dissatisfaction in the dental profession is represented by workplace relationships (tab. II). Significant statistic differences were obtained for answers to questions 13-15 (p<0.05): 71% of dentists were satisfied with their relationship with patients (p=0.002); 75% were happy to collaborate with their colleagues (p=0.001); 85% had good relationships with staff members (p=0.001). The answer to question 16 (Do you have enough free time to meet your personal needs?) had no statistical significance, p=0.331.

TABLE II
Satisfaction with work environmental and pshychological factors

Items	Satisfied and very satisfied		Dissatisfied and very dissatisfied		Chi-square test p
	No.	%	No.	%	
Professional apreciación	150	90.9	16	9.1	0.001*
Pleasant atmosphere	101	61.2	64	38.8	0.021*
Autonomy	127	77	38	23	0.002*
Promotion opportunities	85	51	80	49	0.551
Patient relations	117	71	48	29	0.002*
Relationships with colleagues	123	75	42	25	0.001*
Coworker relationships	140	85	25	15	0.001*
Personal time	79	47.8	86	52.2	0.331

* statistically significant at p<0.05

3. Career satisfaction regarding independent variables (tab. III). The results of multiple logistic regression analysis show that the best predictors of job satisfaction are represented by a monthly income higher than 1,000 euros (OR=6.32, CI=3.11-35.8),

employment in a private practice (OR= 3.21, CI=4.23-23.5), professional autonomy (OR=2.23, CI=1.45-17.6), lack of fatigue (OR=2.01, CI=1.09-3.56) and good dentist-patient relationships (OR=1.56, CI=1.23-1.97).

TABLE III
**Multiple logistic regression analysis:
career satisfaction regarding independent variables**

Independent variables	Odds ratio (95% CI)	p
Gender female male	0.25 (1.08- 3.54)	0.123
Age (years) 26-35 36-54	0.22 (0.70-3.84)	0.322
Employment private office public service	3.21 (4.23-23.5)	0.001
Place of work capital: Iasi county	0.23 (0.45-1.09)	0.112
Income value €600 - €1,000 > €1,000	6.32 (3.11-35.8)	0.001
Fatigue satisfied and very satisfied dissatisfied and very dissatisfied	2.01 (1.09-3.56)	0.003
Promotion opportunities satisfied and very satisfied dissatisfied and very dissatisfied	0.87 (0.11-1.02)	0.441
Personal time satisfied and very satisfied dissatisfied and very dissatisfied	0.09 (0.77-3.89)	0.234
Professional autonomy satisfied and very satisfied dissatisfied and very dissatisfied	2.23 (1.45-17.6)	0.008
Patient relationship satisfied and very satisfied dissatisfied and very dissatisfied	1.56 (1.23-1.97)	0.005

p – significance level, OR – odds ratio, CI – confidence interval

DISCUSSION

The purpose of this survey was to understand if in today's Romania the dentist still has the *motivation* and *satisfaction*

necessary to continue practicing dentistry, if there is still passion and wish to treat patients, as well as the related sacrifice. Other factors should not be omitted from

this equation, such as: the low socioeconomic status of some communities, a degree of rigidity of the education systems, and an inadequate fiscal and budgetary policy (13).

At the same time, the option to practice dentistry in other European countries, where the net salary is much higher, represents for the young graduate a fantastic opportunity for career development (14).

In this survey, we found that 76% of dentists consider themselves satisfied and very satisfied with their carrier, and 65% with their current workplace. Only 52.1% of the total 165 dentists would choose the same career again, 10.9% say that they consider a carrier change, with the percentage of the undecided ones being surprisingly high, namely 37%. This last variant may be interpreted as a lack of motivation towards their current career. One possible explanation might be that many dentists who participated in this survey are still at the beginning of their career and the problems they face in terms of low income and lack of opportunities may determine them to consider a career change. Satisfaction with the dentist career also involves analyzing the elements that young graduates consider essential at the beginning of their professional activity, of which the earned income was ranked first by 55% of the surveyed dentists. Unfortunately, post-graduate training, which is a key factor in career development, was appreciated by only 32.2% of the study participants. On the contrary, this motivation is considered a priority for dentists in India and Lithuania (3, 8). Another element considered to be less important for a successful career is the continuous medical education appreciated by only 12.1 % of the respondents. In India, Nayak (14) shows that a little less than half of the practitioners attended professional

courses once in 6 months, 32.7% attended at least once in a year, and 22.1% attended rarely or never. It is known that the level of professional satisfaction among physicians in the light of earned income is dependent on the country level of economic development. In our survey, we found out that the best predictor for job satisfaction is a monthly income of more than 1,000 euro (OR=6.32)

In the literature, there are surveys showing that a low income is the most important factor of job dissatisfaction.

Dental professionals are exposed to many risk factors that may affect the quality of life, including physical exhaustion and stress with multiple effects on general health, behavioral disturbances and psychological symptoms. In our study, 55% of the surveyed dentists consider fatigue as a factor of dissatisfaction and from the logistic regression analysis we have found that lack of fatigue and stress at work can be a good predictor of career satisfaction. (OR = 2.01). If other specific factors, such as the stressful conditions, fatigue, lack of recognition and respect for the importance of the activity they carry out are added to these elements related to the poor funding of the public health system, migration or professional reorientation become a fully motivated action.

CONCLUSIONS

In our study, we found that financial security is the most important determinant of job satisfaction and a monthly income of more than 1,000 euro is the best predictor for the motivation to practice dentistry. Monthly income is considered the main cause of satisfaction/dissatisfaction, with 62.9% of dentists believing they should earn more. Other predictors of career satis-

faction include: degree of autonomy, private dental practice, lack of overwork and stress, as well as positive relationships with patients. A negative aspect was related to

the lack of motivation for continuing medical education and ongoing professional training, aspects that dentists consider to be of little importance for career success.

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